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Continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development

Note by the Secretary-General

1. By its resolutions 55/33 U of 20 November 2000, 56/24 Q of 29 November 2001 and 57/75 of 22 November 2002, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts, on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development, taking into account the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the views expressed by Member States and the reports of the Secretary-General on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, with a view to a decision at its fifty-eighth session.

2. Pursuant to those resolutions, the Secretary-General has the honour to submit to the General Assembly the above-mentioned report, prepared with the assistance of the Group of Governmental Experts, on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development.

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Report on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development

Summary

The report of the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, inter alia, provides a summary of the periodic reviews of this instrument that have taken place since its establishment in 1992; an analysis of the available data on reporting; an assessment of the operation of the Register; and a detailed examination of issues related to its further development, including the expansion of its scope and technical adjustments to the seven categories of arms covered by the Register.

The report concludes that the Register has made significant progress since 1992 and that it has entered a period of increased participation. Renewed efforts are now required to ensure reporting on a regular basis and progress towards universal participation, as well as continued attention to its further development and increased relevance. It makes a number of recommendations, including adjustments to two of the seven categories, as well as measures to strengthen the role of the Secretariat.

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Foreword by the Secretary-General

At a time when advances in the field of multilateral disarmament have generally been slow and difficult, it is gratifying to note that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has made significant progress as a voluntary arms transparency mechanism.

The Register plays an important confidence-building role by discouraging excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms. The transparency it provides on arms transfers can help to minimize the risk of misunderstanding or miscalculation and thereby contribute to greater trust and more stable relations among States. The data and information provided by reporting States also help to improve and strengthen bilateral and regional dialogues on security concerns.

I welcome the consensus report of the 2003 Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation and further development of the Register. If adopted, the recommendations in the present report would significantly advance the objectives of the Register. The report takes into account the results of the review conducted by previous groups of governmental experts as well as the views expressed by Member States.

I am pleased that the Group has agreed on substantive technical adjustments to two of the seven categories of conventional arms covered by the Register. The lowering of the reporting threshold for large-calibre artillery systems would enhance the Register's relevance to a number of subregions around the world, particularly in Africa. Another significant recommendation is to include Man-Portable Air-Defence Systems (MANPADS) in the Register under the category of missiles and missile-launchers. This would contribute to broad-based international efforts to stem illicit transfers, particularly in preventing these short-range ground-to-air systems from falling into the hands of terrorists.

The Group was unable to reach consensus on making adjustments to some of the other categories of conventional arms. Nor could it agree on raising the reporting status of procurement through national production and military holdings. Agreement was reached, however, that further consideration be given to those outstanding issues in the next periodic review. Detailed discussions also took place and forward-looking conclusions were reached on the relationship between the Register and small arms and light weapons.

I also welcome the recommendations aimed at making real progress towards achieving universal participation in the Register. I note, in particular, the importance attached to the Secretariat's role in furthering this goal, as well as the encouragement given to interested Member States to support and assist its attainment.

Taken as a whole, the achievements of the Group of Governmental Experts in 2003 are more significant than the outcome of the previous reviews, reflecting the commitment of the international community to safeguarding and further strengthening the Register's future after 10 years of operation. The Secretariat stands ready to provide all possible assistance in further promoting the aims of the Register, with a view to achieving universal participation.

I thank the members of the Group of Governmental Experts for their work in preparing the present report, which I commend to the General Assembly for its consideration.

Letter of transmittal

1 August 2003

Sir,

I have the honour to submit herewith the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The Group was appointed by you in pursuance of paragraph 5 (b) of General Assembly resolution 55/33 U of 20 November 2000, paragraph 4 (b) of resolution 56/24 Q of 29 November 2001 and paragraph 4 (b) of resolution 57/75 of 22 November 2002.

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The report was prepared between March and August 2003, during which time the Group held three sessions in New York: the first from 17 to 21 March, the second from 12 to 23 May and the third from 21 July to 1 August.

The members of the Group wish to express their appreciation for the assistance they received from members of the Secretariat of the United Nations. In particular, they wish to thank João Honwana, Chief, Conventional Arms Branch, Department for Disarmament Affairs; Nazir Kamal, Conventional Arms Branch, Department for Disarmament Affairs, who served as Secretary of the Group; and Sarah Meek, who served as consultant to the Group. The Group is also grateful to Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his support.

I have been requested by the Group of Governmental Experts, as its Chairman, to submit to you, on its behalf, the present report, which was approved by consensus.

(*Signed*) Roberto García **Moritán**
Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts on
the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms

I. Introduction

A. Establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms

1. The General Assembly, by its resolution 46/36 L of 9 December 1991, entitled "Transparency in armaments", requested the Secretary-General to establish and maintain at United Nations Headquarters in New York a universal and non-discriminatory Register of Conventional Arms and to set out the arrangements for the consideration of its development. The Assembly called upon all Member States to provide data annually on imports and exports of conventional arms in the seven categories covered by the Register and invited them also, pending the expansion of the Register, to provide to the Secretary-General, with their annual report on exports and imports of arms, available background information regarding their military holdings, procurement through national production and relevant policies.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly reiterated its conviction that arms transfers in all their aspects deserved serious consideration by the international community, inter alia, because of: (a) their potential effects in further destabilizing areas where tension and regional conflict threaten international peace and security as well as national security; (b) their potentially negative effects on the progress of the peaceful and social development of all peoples; and (c) the danger of increasing illicit and covert arms trafficking. It called upon Member States to exercise due restraint in exports and imports of conventional arms, particularly in situations of tension or conflict, and to ensure that they have in place an adequate body of laws and administrative procedures regarding the transfer of arms and to adopt strict measures for their enforcement.

3. The General Assembly furthermore declared its determination to prevent excessive and destabilizing accumulations of arms, including conventional arms, in order to promote stability and strengthen regional or international peace and security, taking into account the legitimate security needs to States and the principle of undiminished security at the lowest possible level of armaments. The Assembly also reaffirmed the inherent right to individual and collective self-defence recognized in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

B. Developments since 1991

4. This section of the report summarizes the work done by the 1992 panel and successive groups of governmental experts in relation to the development of the Register.

1992 Panel of Governmental Technical Experts

5. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, the Secretary-General convened a panel of governmental technical experts in 1992 to elaborate the technical procedures and make any adjustments to the annex to that resolution necessary for the effective operation of the Register and to prepare a report on the modalities for the early expansion of the scope of the Register by the addition of further categories of equipment and the inclusion of data on military holdings and procurement through national production.

6. The General Assembly[1] endorsed the report of the Secretary-General containing the recommendations of the Panel,[2] called upon all Member States to provide the requested data and information to the Secretary-General annually, beginning in 1993, and encouraged them to provide information on their national arms import and export policies, legislation and administrative procedures, both as regards authorization of arms transfers and prevention of illicit transfers. The Panel also recommended that the consolidated annual report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the data registered and the available background information submitted by Member States be open to the public.

1994 Group of Governmental Experts

7. The 1994 Group of Governmental Experts was established to report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development.[3] The General Assembly took note[4] of the report of the Group.[5] By the same resolution, the Assembly decided to keep the scope of and participation in the Register under review and requested Member States to provide the Secretary-General with their views on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development and on transparency measures related to weapons of mass destruction.

1997 Group of Governmental Experts

8. The 1997 Group of Governmental Experts was established to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development.[6] The General Assembly took note of the report[7] of the Group[8] and endorsed the recommendations contained therein. The Assembly also decided to keep the scope of and participation in the Register under review and, to that end, requested Member States to provide their views to the Secretary-General on the continuing operation and further development of the Register.

9. The General Assembly also adopted resolution 52/38 B[9] in which it took note of the reports of the Secretary-General on transparency in armaments[10] and requested him to seek the views of Member States on ways and means of enhancing transparency in the fields of weapons of mass destruction and transfers of equipment and technology directly related to the development and manufacture of such weapons, with a view to enhancing transparency in the field of conventional weapons.

2000 Group of Governmental Experts

10. The 2000 Group of Governmental Experts was established under General Assembly resolutions 54/54 O and 54/54 I of December 1999. By its resolution 54/54 O, entitled "Transparency in armaments", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development.

11. By its resolution 54/54 I, entitled "Transparency in armaments", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the early expansion of the scope of the Register and on the elaboration of practical means for the development of the Register in order to increase transparency related to weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and to transfers of equipment and technology directly related to the development and manufacture of such weapons.

12. The Group addressed the issue of weapons of mass destruction. In that connection, proposals were made for transparency in nuclear weapons, including bombers and other delivery systems, weapons-grade material and production facilities, as well as for a review of the Register, with the aim of including weapons of mass destruction. The Group recognized the importance of the principle of transparency and its relevance to weapons of mass destruction. However, particularly taking into account the fact that the Register covered conventional arms only, the Group agreed that the question of transparency in weapons of mass destruction was an issue that should be addressed by the General Assembly.

13. In considering the development of the Register, the Group took full account of the relationship between transparency and the security needs of States. It reaffirmed that participation in the Register, which was voluntary, was a means by which States could signal their preparedness to enter into dialogue with other States on this aspect of security policy. Participation in the Register can provide a valuable input into bilateral and regional dialogues on security concerns and the evolution of a more cooperative approach to security. In that context, the Group recalled that transparency was not an end in itself, nor was the Register a control mechanism, but rather a confidence-building measure designed to improve security relations between States.

14. The Group engaged in an extensive and detailed examination of the issue of adjustments to the seven categories of weapons covered by the Register, including the concepts of force projection and force multiplier capabilities in recognition of technological developments in the conduct of modern warfare. The issue of whether weapons systems could be described as offensive or defensive was also broadly discussed and it was recognized that any distinctions must take differences in the military doctrines of States into account. The Group examined whether this kind of adjustment would make the reporting procedure more complex and whether it might affect the scope of the Register and the goal of universal participation.

15. Within the context of issues relating to the expansion of the scope of the Register, the Group considered the issue of including data on military holdings and procurement through national production.

16. The General Assembly endorsed the report[11] of the Group and its recommendations.[12] The Assembly also decided to keep the scope of and participation in the Register under review and, to that end, requested Member States to provide the Secretary-General with their views on the continuing operation and further development of the Register and on transparency measures related to weapons of mass destruction.

17. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Group. The implementation of those recommendations has been undertaken, inter alia, through the dissemination of the simplified form for the filing of "nil" returns; updating the United Nations information booklet on the Register and distributing it to the Member States; providing increased information on the Register through the Register web site;[13] and, with the assistance of interested States, the holding of regional or subregional workshops, seminars and other activities to encourage greater participation in the Register. Additional booklets on the Register were also published and distributed widely. The non-availability of additional resources, however, prevented a

feasibility study on the electronic filing of national submissions to the Register from being undertaken.

2003 Group of Governmental Experts

18. By its resolution 57/75 of 22 November 2002, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts based on equitable geographical representation, to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, taking into account the views expressed by Member States and the earlier reports of the groups of governmental experts.

19. In 2003, the Group of Governmental Experts considered the report of the previous groups, as well as the views expressed by Member States and the related resolutions of the General Assembly.

20. The Group reviewed the developments that have taken place in arms transparency in the context of the current global and regional security situation since the inception of the Register in 1992. In particular, the Group took note of the statement by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Register, including his observation that the Register enjoys wide international support and that its progress in recent years has been highly encouraging. The Secretary-General also stated that if the effectiveness of the Register were to be strengthened further, it could serve as a significant early warning mechanism, contributing with other instruments to the prevention of conflict and to restraint in arms acquisition. In view of the scarcity and limited nature of global arrangements devoted to conventional weapons, it was observed that efforts should be made to improve and further develop the Register, which is one of only two existing global instruments on arms transparency, with a view to achieving greater relevance and wider participation.[14] The Group further observed that the Register had established a norm of transparency and had stimulated many Governments to develop and streamline their national systems for monitoring and regulating arms transfers. The Group believed that submissions by Member States to the Register provide a significant amount of official information that would not have been available otherwise, and that this information provided a basis for subregional, regional and global consultations between Governments.

21. The Group reaffirmed the role of the Register as a confidence-building measure designed to improve security among States and took note of the message of the Secretary-General that the Register is an important tool in the work of increased openness and transparency in the field of armaments. The Group was aware that it was reviewing the operation and further development of the Register at a significant period in its history with 10 years of data available for review. The Group emphasized that after such a period of operation it was appropriate to consider measures that would continue to keep the Register relevant to an increasing number of States, thus supporting the goal of universal participation, while also keeping its development abreast of technological changes in weapons systems and developments in military doctrine since its inception in 1992. The Group noted that the Register could contribute to enhancing confidence, easing tensions, strengthening regional and international peace and security and restraining arms transfers, taking into account the legitimate security needs of States. The Group also recognized that this contribution would be increased by greater, more consistent

participation of States in the Register, and by keeping the Register relevant in the light of developments in international peace and security.

22. In considering the development of the Register, the Group took full account of the relationship between transparency and the security needs of States. It reaffirmed that participation in the Register was a means of encouraging dialogue between States on this issue of security policy, which can provide valuable input into bilateral, regional and subregional dialogues on security concerns and the evolution of a more cooperative approach to security and conflict prevention.

II. Review of reports submitted to the Register

A. General

23. In the course of its deliberations, the Group had at its disposal the data and information submitted by Governments for the Register by 31 July 2003 for the calendar years 1992 to 2002, inclusive, as reflected in the figures in the appendix to the present report. For the purpose of analysis, the Group utilized the 10 years of data available for the calendar years from 1992 to 2001.[15] The Group also had before it the views of Member States on the operation of the Register and its further development, submitted to the Secretary-General. In light of those data and information, the Group reviewed the operation of the Register with a view to making recommendations for enhancing its operation and further development.

B. Extent of participation

24. The Group noted that, with the exception of calendar year 1998, in each year of operation of the Register, over 90 Governments had submitted reports on international arms transfers. The number of submissions to the Register for the calendar years 2000 and 2001 increased significantly over all previous years. The highest participation level was achieved for the calendar year 2001, when 126 Governments submitted reports (see appendix, figure 1). The Group was encouraged by the increasing level of participation.

25. The Group took account of the fact that, as of 31 July 2003, a total of 164 Member States[16] have participated in the Register at least once, either by reporting a transfer or submitting a "nil" return. In addition, the Cook Islands and Niue have reported to the Register. Consistency in reporting has improved, most notably for calendar years 2000 and 2001.

26. In the 10 years of its operation, 52 States have participated consistently, while 20 have reported only once, and 27 have never submitted a report. The frequency of reporting by Governments is shown in the appendix to the present report (see appendix, figure 2).

27. Transfers involving some of the States not participating in a given year are reported upon in returns submitted by others participating in that year. Of the Member States that have never submitted reports, since 1992 there have been at least 10 States on average each year that have been reported upon by other Member States as either an importer or exporter. That number reached 22 for calendar year 2000 and 27 for calendar year 2001. Of those reported upon for calendar year 2001,

26 were reported as importers and one as an exporter. In addition to the 166 States that have actively participated in the Register to date, another 20 have been reported upon, bringing the total number of States that have participated in the Register or have been reported upon to 186.

28. The overall coverage of arms transfers provided by the Register can be calculated quantitatively. The total number of States involved in arms transfers covered by the Register in any given year is greater than the number of participating States in that year, as States that did not participate in the Register for that year may have been mentioned by those States submitting returns to the Register. Thus, 126 States participated in calendar year 2001, but the Register covered references to a total of 153 States. Of these additional 27 States, 15 have never participated, while 12 have participated at least once prior to calendar year 2001.

29. It was observed by the Group that the Register covers the great bulk of the global arms trade in the seven categories of conventional arms, as almost all significant suppliers and recipients of these weapons submit reports regularly.

30. Although the goal of universal participation has not yet been reached, the increase in reporting between 1999 and 2001 was viewed positively by the Group. The Group took note, however, of some of the factors affecting universal participation on international arms transfers. In some cases, States did not possess equipment or engage in transfers of equipment covered by the seven categories of the Register.

31. The Group emphasized the continuing importance of reporting "nil" transfers in order to confirm that no transfer had taken place. Overall, however, it was noted that many States do submit "nil" reports and that the submission of "nil" reports has increased each year since 1998. The number or States submitting "nil" reports for the calendar year 2001 was 77. Data on "nil" reports for both imports and exports and on international arms transfers appears in the appendix (see figure 3).

32. There remain, however, a number of potentially "nil"-reporting States that have not yet participated in the Register by submitting a "nil" return. Their participation is important in order to make progress towards the goal of universal participation and to expand the geographical boundaries of confidence-building through arms transparency. It was observed that some States that had been submitting "nil" reports were not consistent in their participation. In order to sustain growth in the level of consistent participation, it is important that "nil" reports are submitted, where appropriate. For example, six States that had participated in calendar year 2000 by submitting a "nil" report did not do so in 2001. The Group also noted that a substantial percentage of participating States had submitted "nil" reports for each of the 10 years. On average, "nil" reports account for 47 per cent of total participation. For calendar year 2001, approximately 60 per cent of the total submissions were "nil" reports.

33. It was noted that the level of reporting varied by region and that the pattern remained largely consistent over the reporting years. Participation in all regions improved in 2000 and 2001, although it remains low in some subregions. Participation by region, based on a United Nations list of regional groups, and for certain subregions by geographical groupings, is provided in the appendix to the present report (see figures 4-11).

34. It should be noted that the data in figures 4 through 11 represent Member States only. Thus, the submissions by the Governments of Cook Islands and Niue are not included. However, in all other figures and tables they are included.

35. Additional data on participation, showing ratios within regions, are provided in the appendix (see table 1).

C. Reports on exports and imports

36. The Group observed that the number of States reporting exports and imports remained relatively stable throughout the period under review. The number of submissions showing exports and imports, as well as "nil" returns for calendar years 1992 to 2001 is reflected in the appendix (see figure 12).

37. It was observed that a number of States did not report to the Register, although they were reported upon as either an exporter or importer. On average, between calendar years 1992 to 1999, 11 States fell into this category, while for calendar years 2000 and 2001, 21 States and 27 States, respectively, were in this category. The States were not always the same each year.

D. Reports on additional background information

38. The number of States reporting additional background information[17] has increased over the 10 years of operation of the Register. States are invited to provide information on procurement through national production and military holdings and can submit the information in any form they wish. A total of 31 States submitted reports on their military holdings for the calendar year 2001, while 29 submitted reports regarding their procurement through national production for the same calendar year. Of those States reporting this information, a significant majority provided information on the model and type, marking a qualitative increase in the data. The overall pattern of reporting on procurement through national production and military holdings is provided in the appendix (see figure 13). During the period from 1992 to 2001, some States reported on weapons falling outside the categories covered by the Register. The Group observed that many States had reported national policies relevant to the Register only once and thereafter reported only changes or additions as they occurred. A total of 39 States had provided such information since 1992, with 10 States providing that information for calendar year 2001.

E. Assessment of reporting

39. In reviewing the 10 years of operation of the Register, the Group observed that in a number of cases participation lacked consistency. The Group therefore welcomed the continuing commitment of participating States to report to the Register on a regular basis. Continuity of reporting was important to preserve the relevance of the Register and to provide a basis for analysis of trends over time. The Group considered that non-participation or inconsistent participation by States could be attributed in some cases to political and bureaucratic reasons, as well as inadequate institutional capacity. In addition, some States might not have been convinced that the Register alone was relevant to their security concerns. In other

cases, the existing scope and parameters of the Register could be a reason for non-participation as well as a lack of resources or awareness of the operation and procedures of the Register. It was also noted that armed conflicts, severe political crises, or other negative developments in the international security situation might have hampered reporting in some cases.

40. The Group considered that achieving wider participation in the Register was of high importance. Greater awareness of the function of the Register and familiarity with its procedures could facilitate increased participation. Universality of participation would greatly increase the value of the Register as a confidence-building measure. Furthermore, failure to report by both the exporter and importer created uncertainty regarding the accuracy of the reported data, which wider participation would help to reduce.

41. The Group noted with satisfaction the improvements in reporting by States, such as the use of the simplified "nil" reporting form, achieved on the basis of recommendations of the 2000 Group of Governmental Experts.

42. The Group reaffirmed the value of participation by the submission of "nil" reports. Such reports helped to complete the overall picture of arms transfers within the scope of the Register and are a valuable contribution to the confidence-building process provided by the Register. In this regard, the Group noted that "nil" reporting had increased for calendar years 2000 and 2001.

43. The Group noted that the number of States meeting the 31 May deadline for the submission of reports had increased for calendar years 2000 and 2001. In 2001, 88 countries submitted their reports by 31 May. While States may report at any time, the Group considered it important that States report promptly by 31 May to enable the Secretariat to prepare the consolidated annual report on the Register in good time for consideration by the General Assembly. Prompt reporting would also enhance transparency by shortening the time between receiving such data and making it available to all Member States.

44. In analysing reporting by Governments, the Group noted significant variations among regions. These variations followed a consistent pattern, which could be related to reasons mentioned in paragraph 39 above. Changes in regional or subregional security and/or political situations in a particular calendar year could also play a role in the pattern of reporting from regions. However, since the inception of the Register, the general trend has been towards higher reporting from all regions.

45. The Group observed that mismatches continue to occur on details of transfers, such as the number of items transferred, the date of the transfer and the type of equipment, and that an important reason for some of those discrepancies could be the lack of a common definition of a transfer. This led to differing interpretations of not only whether a transfer had taken place but also of the timing of a transfer. National practices continue to differ and sometimes a transfer is reported in different years, leading to a mismatch in the Register. The Group noted that the practice of States in providing information on the reporting form on national criteria on transfers was helpful. The Group also recognized the utility of States conducting consultations prior to the submission of annual reports to prevent mismatches from occurring.

46. The Group was encouraged to note that the number of participating States using the "Remarks" column in the reporting format to provide, inter alia, the model and type of equipment transferred, had increased over the 10 years of reporting. Almost all of the 49 States reporting transfers used the "Remarks" column to provide a description of types and models for calendar year 2001.

47. The Group reaffirmed the view that the use of the "Remarks" column helped in gaining an understanding of the data provided and in identifying or reducing discrepancies, thereby adding considerable value to the Register. Information on models and types added clarity and provided an important qualitative element to reporting. The Group therefore encouraged Governments to maximize their use of the "Remarks" column when reporting transfers.

48. With regard to reporting on available background information, the Group noted with satisfaction the increase in reporting on military holdings and procurement through national production. It also noted that the overwhelming majority of reports on procurement through national production and military holdings provided data on the seven categories of the Register. A number of States reported regularly on these categories of background information. The Group took account of those voluntary practices and considered that continued dissemination of such information would be valuable.

III. Regional aspects

A. Overview

49. In resolution 46/36 L and in subsequent resolutions, the General Assembly called upon Member States to cooperate at regional and subregional levels, taking fully into account the specific conditions prevailing in the regions or subregions, with a view to enhancing and coordinating international efforts aimed at increased openness and transparency in armaments.

50. The Group noted variations in the pattern of reporting among the regions. It welcomed the efforts made by regional organizations and arrangements, individual Member States and the United Nations Secretariat to promote participation in the Register. It expressed the belief that this effort should be sustained in order to further increase the effectiveness of the Register as a confidence-building measure and to facilitate the further development of the Register and the goal of universal participation in the Register. The Group took note of the different security conditions, recognizing that complementary confidence- and security-building measures and other efforts to enhance security should take account of specific concerns and security perceptions. In that context, it noted that other measures related to weapons and equipment not covered by the categories in the Register had particular importance in certain regions in ensuring that the whole spectrum of security concerns was taken into account, in particular in those regions in which the threat of armed conflict still existed. The Group also noted that in certain instances the Register had a beneficial influence in stimulating activities in relation to confidence-building measures and discussions on regional security.

51. The Group reviewed the outcomes of the five regional and subregional workshops on "Transparency in armaments" organized in cooperation between the

United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, sponsoring Governments and host nations. Workshops were held in February 2001 in Phnom Penh for States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, hosted by the Government of Cambodia and co-sponsored by the Governments of Canada and Japan. Subsequent workshops, co-sponsored by the Governments of Canada, Germany, Japan and the Netherlands, were held: in March 2002 in Accra for the United Nations Member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), hosted by the Government of Ghana; in June 2002 for the United Nations Member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region in Windhoek, hosted by the Government of Namibia; in November 2002 for the Latin America and the Caribbean region in Lima, hosted by the Government of Peru; and in February 2003 for the Member States of the ASEAN region in Bali, Indonesia, hosted by the Government of Indonesia. In total more than 160 governmental experts participated in the five workshops. The Group valued the information received from the workshop reports and noted the contribution these reports made to its work.

B. Support of the Register through regional arrangements[15]

Africa

52. Overall participation in the Register by African countries has been the lowest among the regions of the world. Levels of participation have fluctuated during the calendar years 1992 to 2001. The lowest level of participation was in calendar year 1998, when only 6 per cent of Member States participated, while the highest level of participation was in calendar year 2001, with 32 per cent of States participating. Participants at the subregional workshops on the Register held in West and Southern Africa noted that reasons for non-participation could include: tensions within a subregion; bureaucratic difficulties in submitting reports; and concerns over national security related to transparency measures. A large proportion of non-participating States or those that have not participated consistently are those that would be likely to return a "nil" report. An analysis of regional reporting for Africa appears in the appendix (see figures 4 and 5).

53. The Group considered the issue of the relevance of the Register in the regional and subregional context. In that regard, the discussion of technical adjustments to the seven existing categories of the Register included, in some cases, consideration of weapon systems falling within the broad spectrum of small arms and light weapons, which have received a greater focus of attention in recent years in Africa. This greater focus on the issue of small arms and light weapons is evidenced by the adoption African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Bamako Declaration of 1 December 2000) by the then Organization of African Unity (OAU) (now the African Union), as well as by the adoption of certain subregional measures and initiatives. These include the ECOWAS moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in West Africa (1998); the Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region (2001); and the Great Lakes Region and Horn of Africa Conference on the Proliferation of Small Arms in March 2000 attended by Foreign Ministers, who adopted the Nairobi Declaration.

The Americas

54. Overall participation from Latin America and the Caribbean has increased from calendar year 1998 to calendar year 2001. In calendar year 1998, 42 per cent of States participated, whereas in calendar year 2001, 79 per cent of Member States participated in the Register. Participation in the region varied by subregion. An analysis of the Latin American and Caribbean States appears in the appendix (see figures 9 and 10). Significant developments in the region in the area of arms transparency are likely to facilitate a higher overall level of participation.

55. In June 1999, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted the landmark Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions. The Convention puts in place a legally binding mechanism for strengthening regional stability through confidence-building and transparency. It requires States Parties to provide annual reports to the OAS depositary on their imports and exports of weapons covered by the Convention, which are identical to those covered by the United Nations Register. States Parties are required to notify the depositary of their acquisitions of conventional weapons, whether through imports or national production, within 90 days of incorporation in the armed forces. States parties that have not acquired weapons are required to submit a "nil" report no later than 15 June each year. The Convention entered into force in November 2002. Eight OAS Member States had ratified the Convention by 1 August 2003. In the field of small arms and light weapons, the Member States of OAS signed and adopted the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials. The Convention came into force in 1998. Twenty OAS Member States had ratified the Convention as of August 2003.

Asia and the Pacific

56. In the region of Asia and the Pacific, the overall level of participation has risen each year since 1999. While the lowest level of participation was 38 per cent in calendar year 1998, the highest level of participation occurred in calendar year 2000 when 67 per cent of Member States reported to the Register. In calendar year 2001, 57 per cent of States reported.[19] The increase was partly due to nearly full participation by the States Members of the Pacific Island Forum in the past few years, making use of the simplified form for submitting "nil" returns as was recommended by the 2000 Group of Governmental Experts. The increased level of participation may be modest compared to some other regions. However, it should be noted that the Asia/Pacific region consists of several distinct subregions, and does not have a region-wide organization comparable to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), OAS and the African Union. An analysis of subregional reporting in Asia and the Pacific appears in the appendix (see figures 6 and 7).

57. As with other regions, levels of participation varied by subregion. Participation has been markedly low in areas of tension such as West Asia, affecting the level of overall participation. In this regard, no significant developments have taken place in terms of participation in the Register nor has a dialogue begun on subregional transparency mechanisms. The Group noted that participation was affected by security concerns and threat perceptions that impacted on transparency and confidence-building efforts more generally as well as participation in the Register in

particular. The Group recognized that low participation in the Register and efforts to further develop and improve the instrument are interrelated. The Group also took note of the action taken by the General Assembly relevant to the Mediterranean context. In its resolution 57/99 of 22 November 2002, entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", adopted without a vote on 22 November 2002, and in similar resolutions in earlier years on the same subject, the General Assembly encouraged all States of the Mediterranean region to favour the necessary conditions for strengthening the confidence-building measures among them by promoting genuine openness and transparency on all military matters, inter alia, by providing accurate data and information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

58. In the subregion of Southeast Asia, from the time of its establishment in 1994 the ASEAN Regional Forum has been making efforts for the eventual participation by all Member States in the Register. The ASEAN Regional Forum Confidence-building Mechanisms Seminar on Conventional Weapons Transfers, held in Cambodia in February 2001, and the United Nations Workshop on Transparency in Armaments, held in Indonesia in February 2003, made valuable contributions to such efforts.

Europe

59. Participation by the European States has been the highest among the regions of the world since the inception of the Register. In particular, States in Western Europe have reported consistently since calendar year 1997, while States in Eastern Europe have been reporting consistently since calendar year 2000.

60. To strengthen confidence and security among its participating States, OSCE has adopted a number of documents and other confidence- and security-building measures providing for increased transparency on matters related to conventional armaments. By a decision of the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation in December 1997, participating States circulate annually among themselves their data and other background information as provided to the United Nations Register. This information may be reviewed and discussed annually as well as at the time of the annual implementation assessment meeting of the Forum, thus encouraging dialogue among participating States. Following a decision by the OSCE Forum in December 1995, OSCE participating States provide information annually, in response to a questionnaire, on their policy and national practices for the export of conventional arms and related technology. In November 2000, the OSCE adopted its Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons. With effect from June 2002, the document requires participating States to exchange information annually on transfers of small arms and light weapons.

61. The European Union continues to promote adherence to the Register by encouraging all its Member States and associated countries to submit returns to the United Nations Register.

C. Assessment of the workshop series

62. The Group reviewed the regional/subregional workshops on "Transparency in armaments" held between 2002 and 2003, in accordance with the recommendation of the 2000 Group of Governmental Experts and the implementation of General

Assembly resolution 55/33 U, which endorsed the report of the Group. The objectives of each workshop were to enhance familiarity with the scope and procedures of the Register of Conventional Arms and the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures and to obtain feedback from participating Member States to promote continued progress and further development of the two mechanisms.

63. In reviewing the outcomes of the two subregional workshops conducted in Africa, the Group observed that States in these regions valued the Register as a confidence-building measure and agreed in principle on the need for participation, which could have a positive impact on regional security and stability. In the ECOWAS region, the issue of small arms and light weapons was judged to be of special relevance. The report noted that adjustment of categories, such as lowering the calibre of heavy artillery or lowering the tonnage of warships, could increase such relevance. It also noted the possibility of a significant role for the United Nations Secretariat in follow-up to the information emerging from the Register. In the report of the SADC workshop, issues that could assist in increasing the relevance of the Register to that subregion included small arms and light weapons and the transfer of technology as new categories to the Register. Participants recognized the importance of transparency in weapons of mass destruction, but considered that this should be pursued outside the Register.

64. In reviewing the outcome of the regional workshop held for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Group noted that as far as the seven categories were concerned, the participants supported the idea of extending the definition of these categories in order to enlarge the confidence-building role of the Register. Some participants, notably from the Caribbean States, stressed their concern about small arms and light weapons and the relevance of a transparency instrument for such weapons, but they were flexible as to whether this should be pursued through the United Nations Register or some other instrument.

65. In reviewing the outcome of the ASEAN subregional workshop, the Group noted the suggestion to hold such workshops at regular intervals to sustain familiarity with the instrument. The participants acknowledged the importance of transparency in armaments and the practical exercise of submission of returns, including "nil" returns, where applicable. With regard to the expansion of the scope of the Register, the general view among the participants appeared to be in favour of a pragmatic approach that would allow for continued progress without endangering the instrument's future. The question of raising the profile of "procurement through national production" and "military holdings" in the Register was also raised.

66. The Group found that the workshops had provided a valuable opportunity for Member States to become more informed about the Register and to discuss reasons for variances in regional reporting. The workshops also helped to facilitate greater participation and more consistent reporting to the Register. There was broad support for the Register in all regions and subregions covered by the workshop series, while in some regions and subregions enhancing the relevance of the Register in terms of its scope was considered important for achieving greater participation. The Group was also encouraged by the recognition of many participating States that better use should be made of national points of contact to facilitate communication related to the Register.

D. Enhancing implementation at the regional and subregional levels

67. The Group felt that regional and subregional efforts should be encouraged as they may lead towards a greater degree of openness, confidence and transparency in a region, thereby promoting greater participation in the Register. The Group expressed the hope that increased regional participation and efforts to update and develop the Register will be mutually reinforcing. In that context, the Group believed that it was necessary to undertake further action to promote participation in the Register, including the continuation of regional and subregional workshops and other measures designed to promote participation in the Register.

68. The Group felt that promotional and familiarization efforts should be focused, in particular, on those regions or subregions where such efforts could assist in increasing participation or improve the consistency of participation by States. With regard to promoting participating in the Register, the Group noted that a number of States had engaged in multilateral, regional, subregional or bilateral efforts to that end. In addition, the Group noted that some States had assisted in efforts to promote the Register at appropriate regional or subregional levels, for example through sponsoring and hosting the workshops and supporting the production of publications on the Register, and expressed their appreciation for those efforts as well as encouraged States to continue such support. In this context, the role of the Regional Centres of the Department for Disarmament Affairs was reinforced.

IV. Operation of the Register

A. Reporting methods

69. The Group observed that for many States submitting "nil" reports, the simplified reporting form was widely used and that an increasing number of States were returning "nil" reports using the simplified form. The Group expressed satisfaction with the trend towards greater use of the "Remarks" column in the standardized reporting form, as this enhanced the value of information provided on international arms transfers and thereby further strengthened the confidence-building role of the Register. The Group noted that some States are providing available background information to the Secretariat on a voluntary basis in whatever form they deem appropriate, even on areas not covered by the Register, for example small arms and light weapons.

B. Contacts among Member States

70. The Group believed that, in order to avoid and/or resolve possible discrepancies in the data submitted by exporters and importers, as well as other issues relevant to the Register, direct bilateral contacts were important, as well as other contacts, where appropriate. The Group therefore encouraged all Governments to appoint an official, national point of contact. Such points of contact could deal with queries arising from the national submissions with a view to resolving misunderstandings or possible anomalies. It would also provide an efficient channel of communication between national capitals and the Secretariat to facilitate and expedite the submission of reports for the Register and address related matters. The

Group noted that, to date, 82 Governments had provided information to the Secretariat on their national point of contact and encouraged other Governments to provide such information to the Secretariat. It also noted that other official channels of communication, on a bilateral basis, could play a useful role in addressing issues relevant to the Register.

71. The Group discussed the inclusion of an e-mail address for the national point of contact in the standardized reporting form, which currently seeks telephone and fax numbers. The Group also discussed the need for information on national points of contact to be provided by those countries that used the simplified "nil" reporting form. To that end, the Group reviewed methods of including such information.

C. Access to data and information reported

72. The Group believed that in order to enhance the value of the Register as a tool to build confidence in security matters, Member States should be assured of full access to the data and information stored in the Register database. Since the report of the 2000 Group of Governmental Experts, this has been achieved in a number of ways, including the use of electronic means. The Secretariat has established a web page for the Register on the Secretariat home page for disarmament matters, which includes links to other arms transparency instruments and the database, makes national submissions available through a database and includes an electronic version of the United Nations information booklet on the Register. The Secretariat has also actively disseminated publicity material prepared by the Department for Disarmament Affairs and particularly designed to inform national Governments of the relevance of the Register as a confidence-building measure.

73. In addition to those measures, the Group discussed the submission of electronic copies of national reports to the Register. These electronic submissions would serve the purpose of corroborating formal national submissions received in paper form by the Secretariat. The Group noted that States could facilitate the compilation of information by the Secretariat if they were to provide electronic copies of national submissions to the Secretariat. Electronic copies of the forms for returns are available on the web site of the United Nations but returns still must be submitted formally in paper form to the Secretariat.

D. Role of the United Nations Secretariat

74. The Group noted the importance of the role of the Secretariat in giving advice to Member States, when requested, on technical aspects of completing reports to the Register and in clarifying technical ambiguities in reports submitted. To enhance participation, timely reporting to the Register as well as timely preparation of the annual consolidated report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, the Group believed that it was important that the Secretariat continue to play a central role in promoting awareness of the Register and the procedures for reporting.

75. The Group observed that the operation, further development and universalization of the Register require strong and continuing support by the United Nations system and that the continued viability of the Register would be affected if the system was unable to provide adequate support, especially as the workload of the Secretariat in maintaining the Register has increased. In this regard, the Group

noted that institutional support for the Register has steadily declined since the creation of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in 1998 and the assignment of responsibility for the Register to the newly created Conventional Arms Branch in 1999. The initial staffing levels approved by the General Assembly for the Register in 1994 were three full-time staff members, one P-5 Senior Political Affairs Officer, one P-2 Associate Political Affairs Officer, and one G-6 General Service staff member. The Group underscored the importance of restoring support for the Register to its original levels and establishing transparency and confidence-building as one of the core missions of the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

76. The Group expressed appreciation of the role of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in disseminating useful information and educative material relating to the Register. In that regard, it commended the Department for the establishment of the Register web page, its crucial support for the regional and subregional workshops and ongoing efforts to promote participation and raise awareness of the Register and its role as a confidence-building measure.

77. The Group considered ways and means by which support to the Secretariat could be extended. In this regard, the Group considered the option of using a trust fund, to which Member States, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individuals could make contributions to support the Register, inter alia, through workshops, publications and further development of the web site. The Group also discussed the provision of direct support to the Secretariat as a means of providing extrabudgetary assistance to support the Register. This support could include in-kind contributions, inter alia, logistical support for workshops, direct financial support, hosting workshops or providing for the inclusion of a qualified expert on the Register at other relevant meetings.

V. Development of the Register

A. General

78. By its resolution 46/36 L, the General Assembly initiated the process for the adjustment of categories and the expansion of the scope of the Register by the addition of further categories of equipment and the inclusion of data on military holdings and procurement through national production. Modalities for such adjustments and expansion were considered by the 1992 Panel, which presented its findings to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. Subsequent Groups of Governmental Experts, in 1994, 1997 and 2000, extensively discussed the question of further development of the Register, but no agreement was reached.

79. The 2003 Group of Governmental Experts undertook a detailed and extensive examination of the issue of adjustments to the seven categories of equipment covered by the Register and the expansion of its scope. In this task, the Group took into account the observations of the Secretary-General on the tenth anniversary of the Register:

> "To increase the Register's relevance in all subregions, and thereby facilitate greater participation, technical adjustments to the agreed categories of weapons systems needs to be considered. Continued improvement in the quality of data provided by Governments would also help strengthen the

Register. And it could be made a more balanced instrument if countries gave the same priority to reporting procurement through national production and military holdings as they give to reporting on international arms transfers."

80. The Group noted that some Member States had provided the Secretary-General with their views on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development and on transparency measures related to weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 54/54 O, paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 54/54 I, paragraph 5 (a) of General Assembly resolution 55/33 U and paragraph 4 (a) of General Assembly resolution 56/24 Q.

81. In the context of proposals regarding technical adjustments, the Group examined the concepts of force projection and force multiplier capabilities due to technological and doctrinal developments affecting the conduct of modern warfare during the years of operation of the Register. These proposals were made without prejudice to the differing military doctrines of the Member States with regard to the offensive-defensive nature of the weapon systems. In the context of force project and force multiplier capabilities, the Group also recognized the different levels of development in the field of military technologies and doctrines of various Member States and the conceptual differences among them with regard to whether such systems should fall within the scope of the Register's seven categories. The Group sought, therefore, to take a balanced view with regard to technical adjustments that might be of more relevance in some regions where their security concerns were not currently met by the scope of the Register's seven categories. The Group also examined the question of whether adjustments of this type would affect the focus of the Register and participation.

82. With regard to the expansion of the scope of the Register, the Group also considered the issue of procurement through national production and the proposal of encouraging the voluntary provision of information in the same format as that for reporting transfers. In addition, the Group reviewed the interrelation of small arms and light weapons with the Register, especially in light of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July 2001.

83. The discussions undertaken by the Group were enriched by contributions made by the members of the Group of Governmental Experts, including through the introduction of discussion papers and other specific proposals for technical adjustments to the seven categories and the possible expansion of the scope of the Register.

B. Relevance of the Register

84. The Group undertook a broad discussion on the relevance of the Register to the security concerns of States after 10 years of its operation. Substantial increases in participation by States during calendar years from 1999 to 2001 indicated that the Register was viewed as an important transparency and confidence-building instrument. The Group noted that the Register, in view of its existing scope, was perceived as less relevant to the security needs of States in some regions or subregions than in other regions. The Group also noted that technical adjustments to

the seven categories of equipment, as well as expansion of the scope of the Register, required that due regard be given to the effect this could have on participation.

C. Categories covered by the Register

Category I
Battle tanks

85. The Group believed that the existing definition of battle tanks provided adequate coverage. In this regard, it was observed that the technological trend was in two areas: towards tanks with higher tonnage and gun calibre or towards using new technologies to develop lighter tanks, although not less than 16.5 metric tons.

Category II
Armoured combat vehicles

86. The Group discussed amendments to the existing definition of armoured combat vehicles that would allow for the inclusion of capabilities related to reconnaissance and electronic warfare, as well as other functions such as armoured recovery vehicles and tank transporters. The question of light tanks was also discussed as such tanks could be viewed within the framework of this category. The Group concluded that all tanks were covered by either category I or II and further specification was not necessary.

Category III
Large-calibre artillery systems

87. Recalling the discussions on adjustments under category III that had taken place during each previous group of governmental experts, the Group examined the relevance and significance of artillery systems between the ranges of 35 and 100 mm, which fall outside the existing definition. For example, lowering the threshold to 75 mm would include 81 and 82 mm mortars, which have been widely used in some recent conflicts, particularly in Africa. The possibility of lowering the calibre to 35 mm was also discussed, including how definitions of artillery systems and light weapons might be affected as the result of such a change. The review of this issue led to an analysis of possible measures to increase transparency in small arms and light weapons. In this context, the Group noted the significant efforts that had been made at the global, regional and subregional levels with regard to small arms and light weapons and, in particular, the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, through which Member States recognized the grave concern about the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world.

Category IV
Combat aircraft

88. In category IV, adjustments were considered in relation to military aircraft, for example the inclusion of force multipliers, such as command of troops and force projection capabilities such as air-to-air refuelling and aircraft designed to perform military transport and airdrop missions. The Group also discussed whether the

existing definition, which referred to "versions of combat aircraft", covered all military aircraft that performed electronic warfare, suppression of air defence and reconnaissance missions. Consideration was also given to the same point under category V. The Group also discussed developments in unmanned aerial vehicles and their relevance to the Register.

Category V
Attack helicopters

89. In category V, the Group examined the question of adjustments in relation to combat support systems, for example, target acquisition (including anti-submarine warfare), communications, command of troops, mine-laying missions or military transport tasks. As with category IV, the Group discussed the implications of technical adjustments that might require rephrasing the category title.

Category VI
Warships

90. The discussion in relation to warships focused on lowering the tonnage of surface warships, with specific discussion on the implications of lowering the tonnage from 750 to 400 metric tons and the option of removing the range limits for missiles and torpedoes, which would include, inter alia, mine-laying vessels. The Group also discussed lowering the tonnage of submarines from 750 to 50 metric tons with the possibility of no reference to missiles and torpedoes which would include, inter alia, midget submarines. The Group also considered lowering the tonnage of surface warships to 150 metric tons and lowering the tonnage of submarines to 50 metric tons while keeping the range of missiles and torpedoes to at least 25 kilometres. The question was raised whether vessels that would be covered by the proposed reduction of tonnage should be regarded as being offensive or defensive or potentially destabilizing.

Category VII
Missiles and missile launchers

91. The Group discussed whether or not missile systems with ranges of less than 25 kilometres, including anti-armour and ground-to-air missile systems should be included in the Register. In addition, the discussion focused on the issue of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and the desirability for increased transparency in the international transfer of these systems. The interrelationship between MANPADS and small arms and light weapons was discussed in this regard.

D. Expansion of the scope of the Register

92. The Group noted that information on procurement through national production could make transparency in arms acquisition more comprehensive. The Group discussed whether or not reporting on procurement through national production should be undertaken on the same level as national reports on transfers. The Group observed that it remained unclear if and how expanding the scope of the Register in this way would influence participation in the Register. The Group also discussed a proposal to make available to participating States an illustrative form for reporting, on a voluntary basis, procurement through national production.

93. Recognizing the sensitivities concerning military holdings, the Group also considered the significance of reporting on military holdings. The Group noted that security concerns, among others, could affect decisions of States whether to report on both types of information.

94. The Group discussed the issue of small arms and light weapons extensively, taking note of the concern over the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons as reflected in the United Nations Programme of Action and recognizing the need "to encourage regions to develop, where appropriate and on a voluntary basis, measures to enhance transparency with a view to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", as stated in that Programme. The Group observed that member States of the OSCE annually exchange information on their transfers of small arms and light weapons. Some interested States have voluntarily provided information to the United Nations on such transfers with their submission to the Register.

E. Future review of the Register

95. The Group emphasized the importance of periodic reviews of the continuing operation of the Register and its further development and, in this connection, also took into account the feedback received from the regional and subregional workshops held between 2001 and 2003 to promote the Register. It noted the increase in participation during the calendar years 1999 to 2001 and the need to ensure the continued progress of the Register as a relevant and significant international transparency and confidence-building measure and a means for conflict prevention.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Conclusions

96. The Group concluded that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms had made significant progress since its inception in 1992 and that it had entered a period of increased participation. Renewed efforts were now required to ensure reporting on a regular basis and progress towards universal participation, as well as continued attention to its further development and increased relevance. It noted that the quality of information provided by States has also grown and improved. Nevertheless the Group observed wide variations in the level of participation among the regions, as well as within regions in some cases, which called for targeted efforts at the regional and subregional levels to encourage wider participation, including the holding of regional and subregional workshops on the Register and sustained support for outreach efforts by the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

97. In addition to sustaining the ongoing series of regional and subregional workshops, the Group noted that there were other activities that could be pursued to promote the objectives of the Register, such as the holding of a session devoted to the Register on the margins of appropriate meetings of international, regional and subregional organizations, as well as other groupings of Member States. In this regard, the Group further noted the possibility of including the Register in the agenda of relevant meetings of regional and subregional organizations, as well as

organs and agencies of the United Nations system, in particular the Regional Centres for Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean of the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

98. While noting that an increasing number of States were reporting consistently, the Group reaffirmed the importance of encouraging all States to report regularly and in a timely manner to the Register. The importance of providing "nil" reports was emphasized as this would confirm that transfers covered by the Register to or from the reporting State had not taken place in a particular calendar year, thereby providing as complete a picture as possible of transfers of equipment covered by the Register. The Secretariat should continue its work to facilitate such reporting.

99. The Group emphasized th importance of prompt reporting by the 31 May deadline as far as possible in order to facilitate early compilation of the data and information. It supported the continuation of the practice by the Secretariat of circulating, under cover of a note verbale, the reporting forms to Member States by the end of January each year to help facilitate timely submissions.

100. The Group expressed satisfaction with the increased use of the "Remarks" column, indicating, models or types of transferred equipment, and concluded that the reports containing such information added qualitatively to the data contained in the Register, enhancing its value as a confidence-building and transparency measure. It encouraged States to continue to provide such information.

101. The Group encouraged Member States to provide their national point of contact for the use of the Secretariat in the operation of the Register and for onward dissemination to interested Member States. It concurred with the 2000 Group that a designated point of contact could play a significant role in facilitating accurate and efficient reporting to the Secretariat by allowing for corroboration of the data submitted as well as providing a means for clarification between Member States.

102. With regard to the national point of contact, the Group agreed that the standardized reporting form should include a provision for an e-mail address and that the reference to "Organization" on the form should also specify "Division/Section". The Group also agreed that since the simplified "nil" reporting form does not contain any reference to information on the national point of contact, it should include the same request as indicated on the standardized reporting form.

103. The Group noted with satisfaction the improvements in electronic dissemination of information on the Register and data submitted, primarily through the United Nations web site. It also encouraged States to provide the Secretariat with both paper and electronic copies of submissions to facilitate corroboration of information provided in their formal submissions to the Secretariat.

104. The Group expressed the hope that greater participation in the Register could be reached through the encouragement of regional and subregional efforts that would lead to a greater degree of openness, confidence and transparency in a region and that increased regional participation and efforts to update and develop the Register will be mutually reinforcing.

105. The Group considered a number of adjustments to the existing seven categories of the Register as reflected in paragraphs 85 to 91 above. As no agreements was reached on some of these adjustments, the Group concluded that

further consideration should be given to the issues raised in the next periodic review of the Register.

106. With regard to the further development of the Register, the Group discussed the proposal of including procurement through national production on the same basis for transfers. The discussions reflected the different viewpoints existing within the Group on this issue. It recognized that some States attached great importance to this issue. The Group welcomed voluntary reporting by a number of States on military holdings and procurement through national production. It recognized that security concerns, among others, could make it difficult for some States to provide both types of information. The Group reaffirmed the goal of early expansion of the Register.

107. The relationship between existing categories and possible new categories of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons, was discussed. The Group noted the concern over the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons as reflected in the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and recognized the need "to encourage regions to develop, where appropriate and on a voluntary basis, measures to enhance transparency with a view to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" as stated in that Programme. The Group noted that interested States could provide voluntary information on transfers of small arms and light weapons with their annual submissions.

108. The Group recognized the particular importance now attached by the international community to the issue of small arms and light weapons, including MANPADS, since the report of the 2000 Group of Governmental Experts and the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July 2001. In this context, the Group also noted the close interrelationship of its work with the Programme of Action and recognized the exceptional circumstances that have developed in the past and that currently exist. Allowing for the further development of that important instrument, the Group considered the inclusion of MANPADS transfers within the scope of the Register. While considering the inclusion of MANPADS in category VII of the Register, the Group agreed that such inclusion should be treated as an exception and that the legitimate security concerns of States should be duly taken into consideration.

109. In order to facilitate universal participation as well as the continued development of the Register, as called for by the General Assembly in resolution 46/36 L and subsequent resolutions, the Group concluded that the review process, initiated at the time of establishment of the Register should be continued. Such a review process was essential to the task of ensuring the continued progress of the Register.

110. The Group recognized the need to support the strengthening of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in order to improve the continuing operation of the Register. The Group concluded that the Department should actively support and promote the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as a primary mission.

111. The Group considered the option of using an appropriate trust fund of the Department of Disarmament Affairs to which contributions could be made to

support the Register, as well as the provision of direct support to the Secretariat through in-kind contributions or financial support.

B. Recommendations

112. The Group recommends that, based on the discussions of the adjustments to the categories covered by the Register, including the exceptional inclusion of Man-Portable Air-Defence Systems (MANPADS) as referred to in paragraph 108 above, the following revised categories and their definitions be used for reporting to the Register.

III. Large-calibre artillery systems

Guns, howitzers, artillery pieces combining the characteristics of a gun or a howitzer, mortars or multiple-launch rocket systems, capable of engaging surface targets by delivering primarily indirect fire, with a calibre of 75 mm and above.

VII. Missiles and missile launchers

(a) Guided or unguided rockets, ballistic or cruise missiles capable of delivering a warhead or weapon of destruction to a range of at least 25 kilometres, and means designed or modified specifically for launching such missiles or rockets, if not covered by categories I through VI. For the purposes of the Register, this sub-category includes remotely piloted vehicles with the characteristics for missiles as defined above but does not include ground-to-air missiles.

(b) Man-Portable Air-Defence Systems (MANPADS).

113. The Group also recommends that:

(a) Member States should participate in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in order to reach the level of universal participation, with a view to achieving the shared goals of the instrument;

(b) Member States should enhance awareness of the Register and the importance of participating on a regular basis in the Register as well as by providing data, available background information and making "nil" reports on categories covered by the Register;

(c) Member States in a position to do so should make use of the "Remarks" column in the standardized reporting form to provide additional data, such as models or types;

(d) Member States should be encouraged to report promptly in order to help ensure the early dissemination to States of the data and the information in the reports;

(e) Without prejudice to the differing situations, capacities and priorities of States, the Group noted that interested Member States in a position to do so, where appropriate and on a voluntary basis, provide additional information on transfers of small arms and light weapons made or modified to military specification and intended for military use; and, where national, subregional and regional mechanisms

exist, recommends that they make use of these reporting methods, including definitions of small arms and light weapons, as they deem appropriate;

(f) Member States should nominate a national point of contact for matters connected with the Register and details on the contact point should be sent with the annual submission on the understanding that this information will be held by the Secretariat and provided only to States. Furthermore, the Secretariat should maintain an updated list of national points of contact and circulate it to all Member States. The standardized reporting form should be amended to allow for the provision of an e-mail address and should also specify a reference to "Division/Section" after "Organization" for the national point of contact;

(g) The simplified form for submitting "nil" returns on exports and imports should be amended to allow for the provision of information on a national point of contact;

(h) The Secretariat should make all possible efforts to promote the Register as a confidence-building measure and a means of conflict prevention and restore the financial and administrative resources that were originally devoted to setting up and operating the Register;

(i) The Secretariat should further strengthen the role of the Regional Centres of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in facilitating progress of the Register;

(j) The workshop series should be sustained, focusing on regions and subregions that have not yet hosted a workshop, as well as returning to regions and subregions periodically, for example every two or three years, to strengthen and consolidate the progress of the Register and receive feedback from regions and subregions on the operation and further development of the Register;

(k) Interested Member States, NGOs and individuals should be encouraged to contribute financial support to the relevant Department of Disarmament Affairs trust fund earmarked for United Nations Register activities and programmes.

114. The Group further recommends that the General Assembly should consider providing additional resources to the Secretariat to operate and maintain the Register and to:

(a) Update the United Nations information booklet on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms on the basis of the present recommendations and distribute it among Member States and regional organizations;

(b) Send a note verbale, with the reporting forms and the categories covered by the Register, to Member States by the end of January and reminders, where appropriate, including through the daily *Journal of the United Nations* or direct contact by the Secretariat;

(c) Ensure that all information relating to the Register is electronically available as soon as possible. The updated United Nations information booklet on the Register should also be made available on the Register web site both as a hypertext linked series of pages and as a downloadable document;

(d) Continue to provide the General Assembly with the annual consolidated report of data and information registered, including that provided on a voluntary basis on military holdings and procurement through national production, together with an index of other additional background information. States providing data on

military holdings and procurement through national production may request that these data not be published;

(e) Ensure that all basic data and information relevant to the Register is available electronically in all official languages of the United Nations;

(f) Undertake a study with the assistance of a technical expert to determine the feasibility of electronic filing of national submissions to the Register;

(g) Further develop and expand the web site of the Register, including establishing links between this web site and other institutions, including international and regional organizations, research institutions and other relevant NGOs;

(h) Send the annual consolidated report of the Secretary-General to capitals and to all permanent missions to the United Nations in electronic form or hard copy, as appropriate;

(i) Facilitate informal meetings relevant to the Register, such as briefings by the Secretariat on its operation and procedures, including on the sidelines of the meetings of the First Committee;

(j) Facilitate the inclusion of sessions on the Register in the agenda of relevant meetings of regional and subregional organizations, other groupings of Member States and organs and agencies of the United Nations system;

(k) Facilitate the holding of regional and subregional workshops, seminars and other events, as appropriate, particularly to encourage greater participation in and understanding of the Register.

Notes

[1] Resolution 47/52 L.

[2] A/47/342.

[3] In accordance with resolution 48/75 E.

[4] Resolution 49/75 C.

[5] A/49/316.

[6] Resolution 51/45 H.

[7] Resolution 52/38 R.

[8] A/52/316.

[9] Resolution 52/38 B.

[10] A/52/312, Corr.1 and 2 and Add.1 and 2 and A/52/316.

[11] Resolution 55/33 U.

[12] A/55/281.

[13] http://disarmament.un.org/cab/register.html.

[14] The other mechanism is the United Nations standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures.

[15] Submissions for calendar year 2002 are ongoing. The most recent completed calendar year is 2001, for which submissions were received in 2002.

[16] Cook Islands and Niue are non-Member States.

[17] In accordance with resolution 46/36 L, para. 10.

[18] In order to facilitate the analysis of trends over the 10 years of operation of the Register, information in this section is provided by percentage. The ratio of participation for each region is presented in the appendix, table 1.

[19] The number of Member States within the Asian States regional grouping increased by six between 2000 and 2001, to 54 (see appendix, table 1).

Appendix

Figures and table on reporting to the Register

(As of 31 July 2003)

Figure 1

Consolidated annual reporting for calendar years 1992-2002

Note: submissions for calendar year 2002 have not been completed

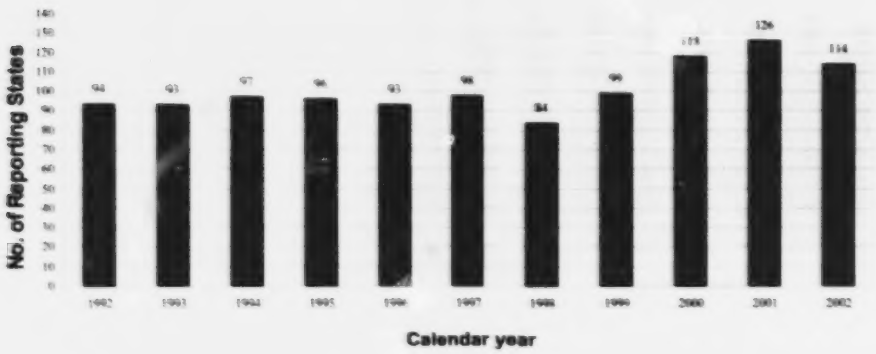


Figure 2

Frequency of reporting for calendar years 1992-2001

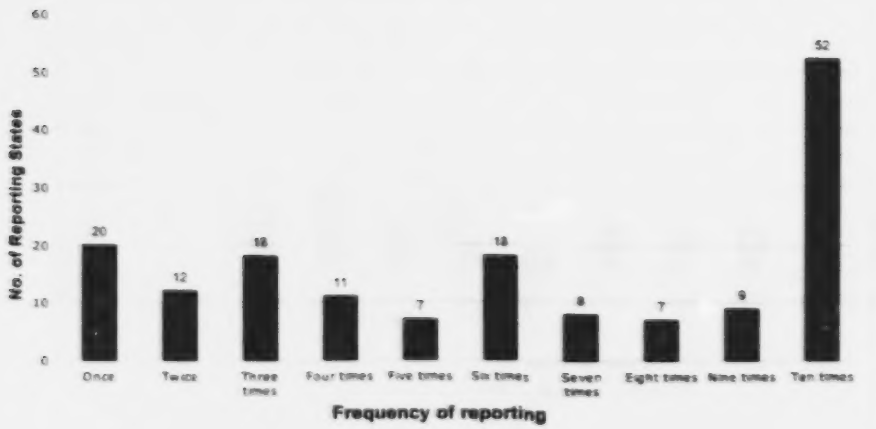


Figure 3
"Nil" reports and reports of transfers 1992-2002

Note: submissions for calendar year 2002 have not been completed

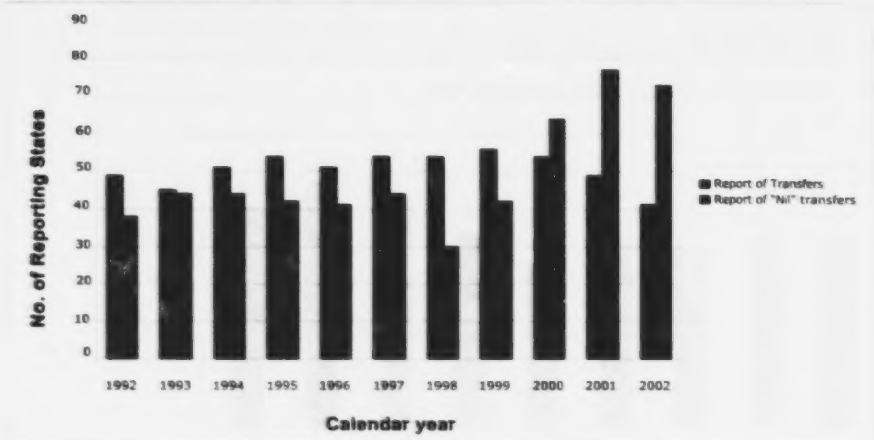


Figure 4
Reporting patterns for Africa 1992-2002

Note: submissions for calendar year 2002 have not been completed

Figure 5
Reporting patterns for Africa by geographical subregion

Note: submissions for calendar year 2002 have not been completed

Figure 6
Reporting pattern for Asia and the Pacific 1992-2002

Note: submissions for calendar year 2002 have not been completed

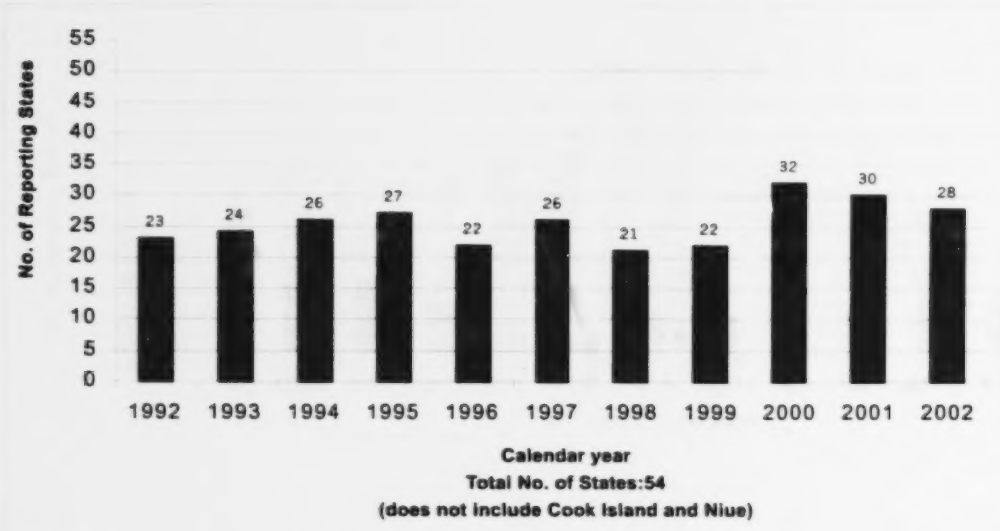
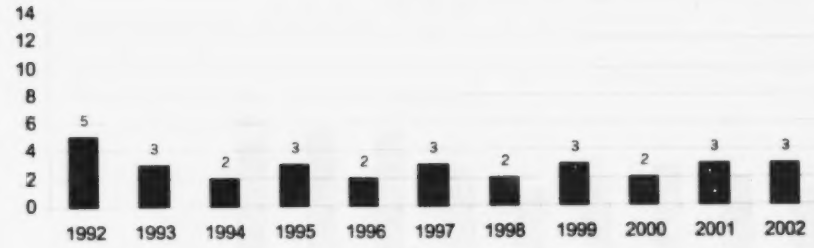


Figure 7
Reporting pattern for Asia by geographical subregions

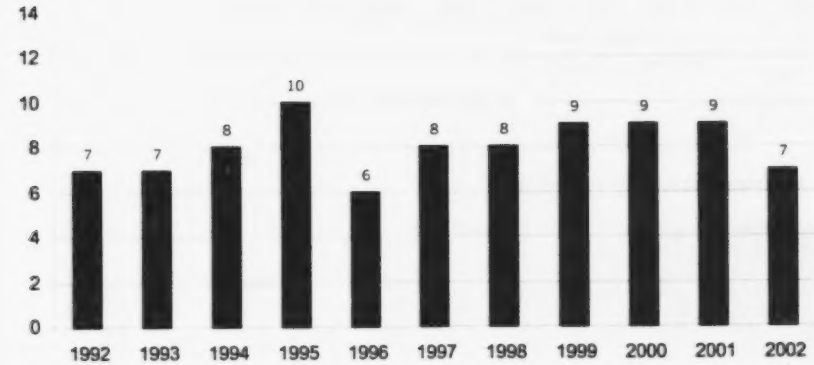
Note: submissions for calendar year 2002 have not been completed

West Asia



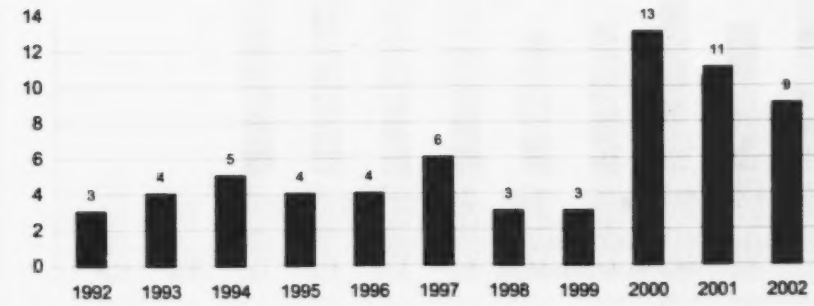
Total No. of States: 13

Central and South Asia



Total No. of States: 13

Pacific Islands



Total No. of States: 13

Figure 8
Reporting pattern for Eastern Europe 1992-2002

Note: submissions for calendar year 2002 have not been completed

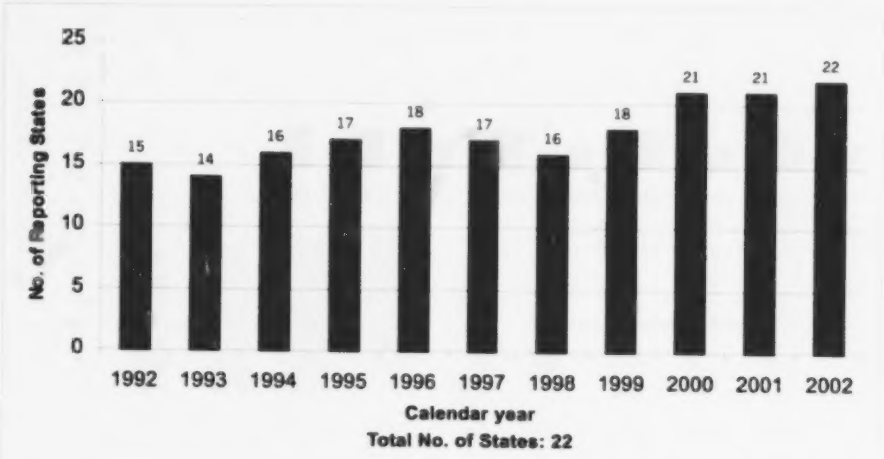


Figure 9
Reporting pattern for Latin America/Caribbean 1992-2002

Note: submissions for calendar year 2002 have not been completed

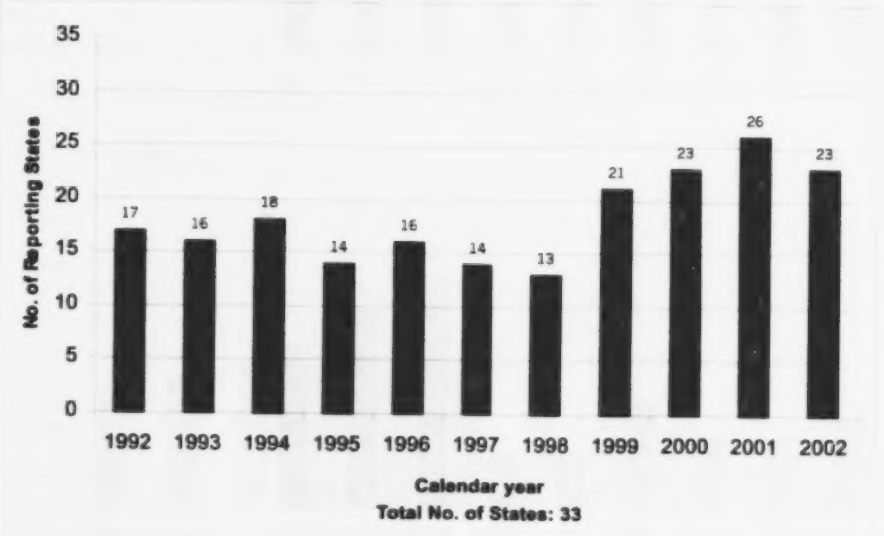


Figure 10
Reporting pattern for Latin America and Caribbean
(By geographical subregions)

Note: submissions for calendar year 2002 have not been completed

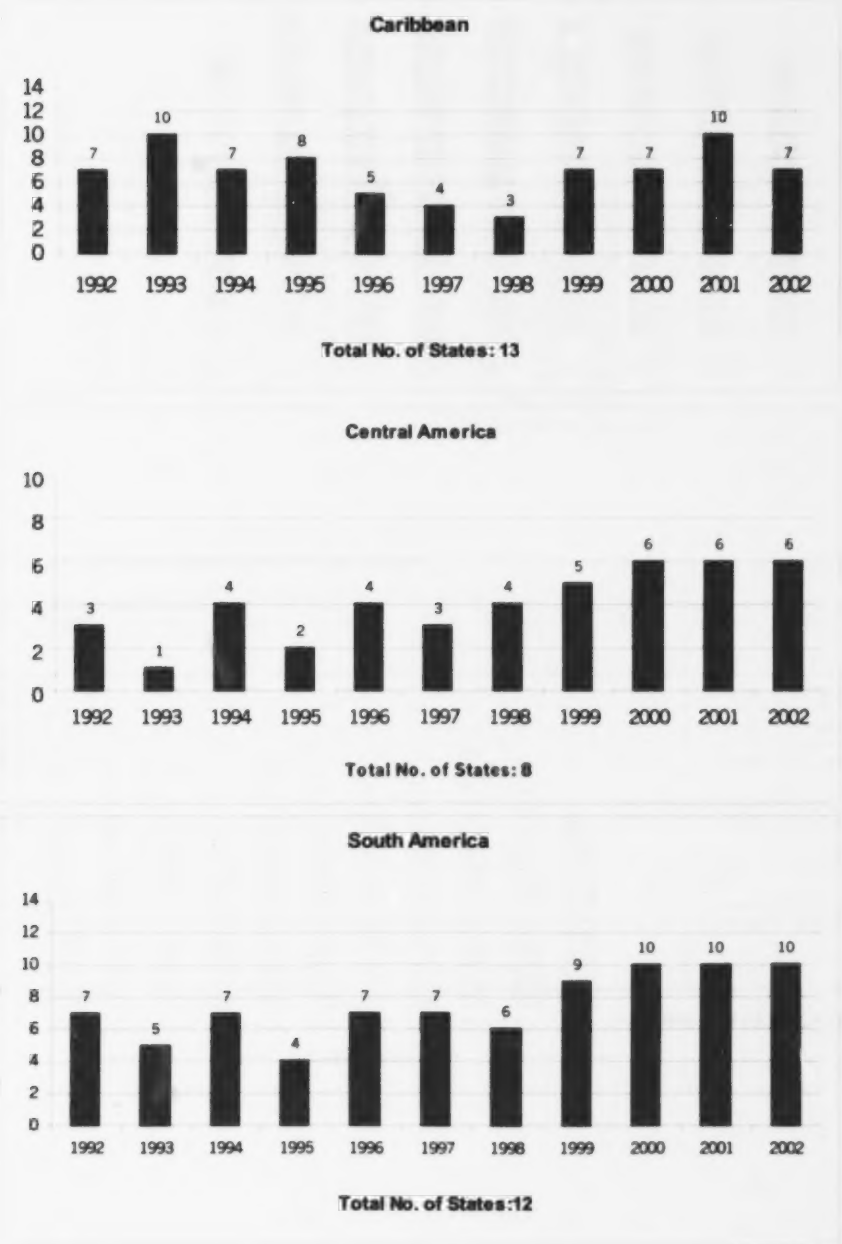


Figure 11
Reporting patterns for Western Europe and Others 1992-2002

Note: submissions for calendar year 2002 have not been completed

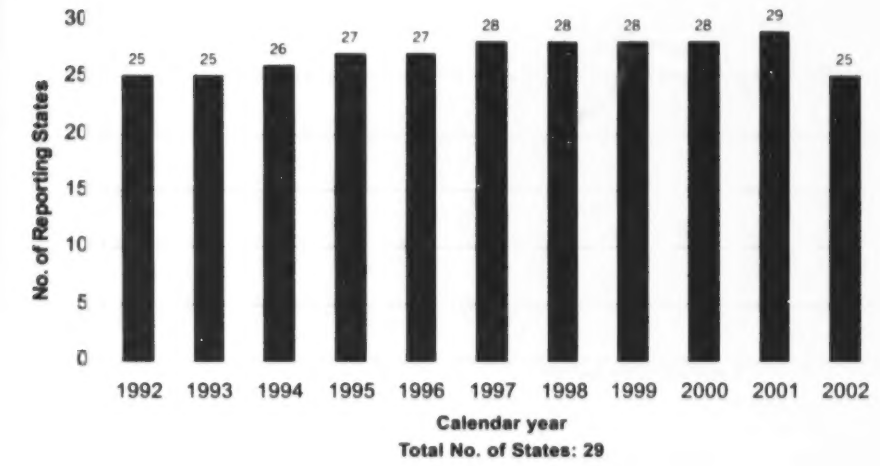


Table 1
Regional reporting ratios

Region	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Africa	13 of 51	13 of 52	10 of 53	9 of 53	8 of 53	10 of 53	3 of 53	7 of 53	11 of 53	17 of 53	15 of 53
Asia	23 of 47	24 of 47	26 of 48	27 of 48	22 of 48	26 of 48	21 of 48	22 of 48	32 of 48	31 of 54	28 of 54
Eastern Europe	15 of 19	14 of 20	16 of 21	17 of 21	18 of 21	17 of 21	16 of 21	18 of 21	20 of 21	22 of 22	22 of 22
Latin America and the Caribbean	17 of 33	16 of 33	18 of 33	14 of 33	16 of 33	14 of 33	13 of 33	21 of 33	23 of 33	26 of 33	23 of 33
Western Europe and Others	25 of 25	25 of 27	26 of 27	26 of 27	26 of 27	28 of 28	28 of 28	28 of 28	28 of 28	29 of 29	25 of 29

Note: Table excludes Cook Islands and Niue.

Figure 12
Reporting exports, imports and "nil" returns 1992-2002

Note: submissions for calendar year 2002 have not been completed

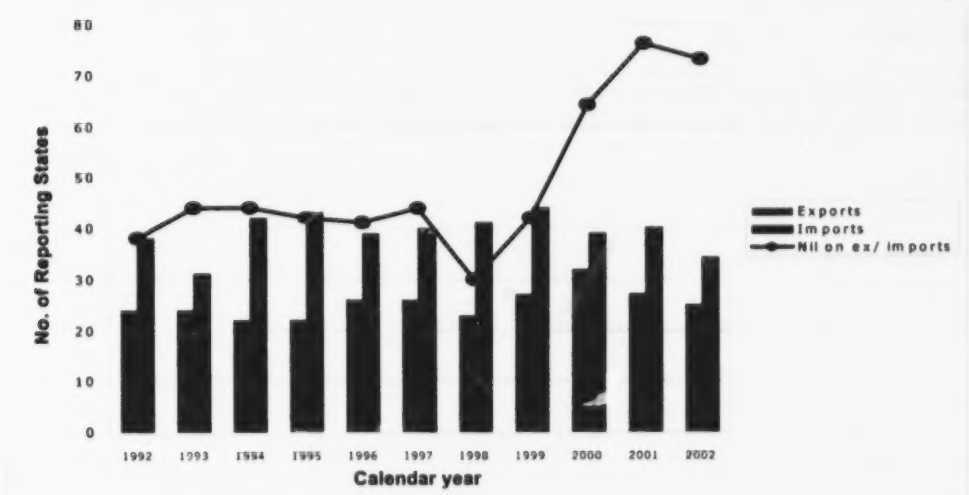
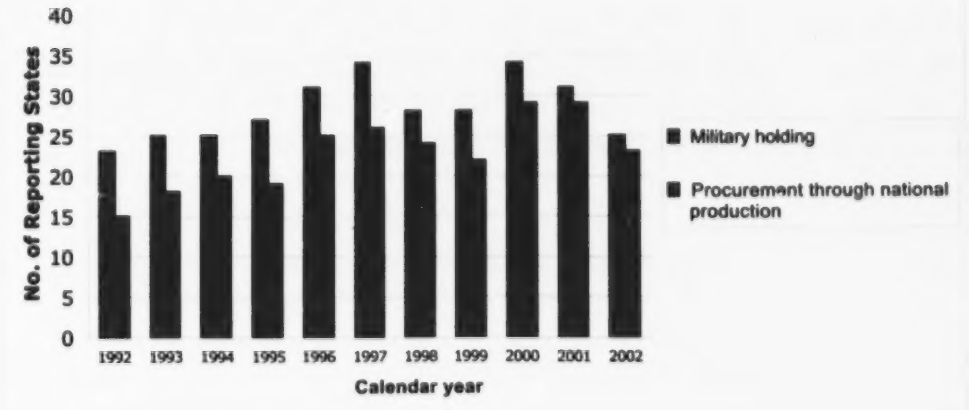


Figure 13
Reporting of available background information

Note: submissions for calendar year 2002 have not been completed



Annex I

Standardized form for reporting international transfers of conventional arms (exports)[a]

Exports

Report of international conventional arms transfers (according to United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/36 L)

Reporting country:

Calendar year:

National point of contact (FOR GOVERNMENTAL USE ONLY):

(Organization, Division/Section, Telephone, Fax, E-mail)

A	*B*	*C*	*D*[b]	*E*[b]	*Remarks*[c]	
Category (I-VII)	*Final importer State(s)*	*Number of items*	*State of origin (if not exporter)*	*Intermediate location (if any)*	*Description of item*	*Comments on the transfer*
I. Battle tanks						
II. Armoured combat vehicles						
III. Large-calibre artillery systems						
IV. Combat aircraft						
V. Attack helicopters						
VI. Warships						
VII. Missiles and missile launchers[d] a) b)						

National criteria on transfers:

[a b c d] See explanatory notes.

The nature of information provided should be indicated in accordance with explanatory notes e and f.

Explanatory notes

(a) Member States that do not have anything to report should file a "nil" report clearly stating that no exports or imports have taken place in any of the categories during the reporting period.

(b) International arms transfers involve, in addition to the physical movement of equipment into or from national territory, the transfer of title to and control over the equipment. Member States are invited to provide with their return a concise explanation of national criteria used to determine when an arms transfer becomes effective. (See paragraph 42 of the annex to document A/49/316).

(c) In the "Remarks" column, Member States may wish to describe the item transferred by entering the designation, type, model or any other information considered relevant. Member States may also wish to use the "Remarks" column to explain or clarify aspects relevant to the transfer.

(d) Multiple-launch rocket systems are covered by the definition of category III. Rockets qualifying for registration are covered under category VII. (See A/58/274, appendix.)

(e) Check any of the following provided as part of your submission:	Check
(i) Annual report on exports of arms	___
(ii) Annual report on imports of arms	___
(iii) Available background information on military holdings	___
(iv) Available background information on procurement through national production	___
(v) Available background information on relevant policies and/or national legislation	___
(vi) Other (please describe)	___

(f) When reporting transfers, which of the following criteria, drawn from paragraph 42 of the annex to document A/49/316, were used:

(i) Departure of equipment from the exporter's territory	___
(ii) Arrival of equipment in the importer's territory	___
(iii) Transfer of title	___
(iv) Transfer of control	___
(v) Others (please provide brief description below)	___

Annex II

Standardized form for reporting international transfers of conventional arms (imports)[a]

Imports

Report of international conventional arms transfers (according to United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/36 L)

Reporting country:

Calendar year:

National point of contact (FOR GOVERNMENTAL USE ONLY):

(Organization, Division/Section, Telephone, Fax, E-mail)

A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*	*Remarks*	
Category (I-VII)	*Exporter State(s)*	*Number of items*	*State of origin (if not exporter)*	*Intermediate location (if any)*	*Description of item*	*Comments on the transfer*
I. Battle tanks						
II. Armoured combat vehicles						
III. Large-calibre artillery systems						
IV. Combat aircraft						
V. Attack helicopters						
VI. Warships						
VII. Missiles and missile launchers[c] a) b)						

National criteria on transfers:

[a] [b] [c] See explanatory notes.

The nature of information provided should be indicated in accordance with explanatory notes e and f.

Explanatory notes

(a) Member States that do not have anything to report should file a "nil" report clearly stating that no exports or imports have taken place in any of the categories during the reporting period.

(b) International arms transfers involve, in addition to the physical movement of equipment into or from national territory, the transfer of title to and control over the equipment. Member States are invited to provide with their return a concise explanation of national criteria used to determine when an arms transfer becomes effective. (See paragraph 42 of the annex to document A/49/316.)

(c) In the "Remarks" column Member States may wish to describe the item transferred by entering the designation, type, model or any other information considered relevant. Member States may also wish to use the "Remarks" column to explain or clarify aspects relevant to the transfer.

(d) Multiple-launch rocket systems are covered by the definition of category III. Rockets qualifying for registration are covered under category VII. (See A/58/274, appendix.)

(e) Check any of the following provided as part of your submission: Check

(i) Annual report on exports of arms ___

(ii) Annual report on imports of arms ___

(iii) Available background information on military holdings ___

(iv) Available background information on procurement through national production ___

(v) Available background information on relevant policies and/or national legislation ___

(vi) Other (please describe) ___

(f) When reporting transfers, which of the following criteria, drawn from paragraph 42 of the annex to document A/49/316, were used:

(i) Departure of equipment from the exporter's territory ___

(ii) Arrival of equipment in the importer's territory ___

(iii) Transfer of title ___

(iv) Transfer of control ___

(v) Others (please provide brief description below) ___

Annex III

Simplified "nil" reporting form

"NIL" report

The Government of _____, in reference to General Assembly resolution _____ of _____, confirms that it has neither exported nor imported any equipment in the seven categories of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms for the calendar year _____, and therefore submits a "nil" return.

National point of contact
(FOR GOVERNMENTAL USE ONLY):

_____

(Organization, Division/Section,

_____

Telephone, Fax, E-mail)

Annex IV

Categories of equipment and their definitions

I. Battle tanks

Tracked or wheeled self-propelled armoured fighting vehicles with high cross-country mobility and a high-level of self-protection, weighing at least 16.5 metric tons unladen weight, with a high muzzle velocity direct fire main gun of at least 75 millimetres calibre.

II. Armoured combat vehicles

Tracked, semi-tracked or wheeled self-propelled vehicles, with armoured protection and cross-country capability, either: (a) designed and equipped to transport a squad of four or more infantrymen, or (b) armed with an integral or organic weapon of at least 12.5 millimetres calibre or a missile launcher.

III. Large-calibre artillery systems

Guns, howitzers, artillery pieces, combining the characteristics of a gun or a howitzer, mortars or multiple-launch rocket systems, capable of engaging surface targets by delivering primarily indirect fire, with a calibre of 75 millimetres and above.

IV. Combat aircraft

Fixed-wing or variable-geometry wing aircraft designed, equipped or modified to engage targets by employing guided missiles, unguided rockets, bombs, guns, cannons or other weapons of destruction, including versions of these aircraft which perform specialized electronic warfare, suppression of air defence or reconnaissance missions. The term "combat aircraft" does not include primary trainer aircraft, unless designed, equipped or modified as described above.

V. Attack helicopters

Rotary-wing aircraft designed, equipped or modified to engage targets by employing guided or unguided anti-armour, air-to-surface, air-to-subsurface, or air-to-air weapons and equipped with an integrated fire control and aiming system for these weapons, including versions of these aircraft which perform specialized reconnaissance or electronic warfare missions.

VI. Warships

Vessels or submarines armed and equipped for military use with a standard displacement of 750 metric tons or above, and those with a standard displacement of less than 750 metric tons, equipped for launching missiles with a range of at least 25 kilometres or torpedoes with similar range.

VII. Missiles and missile launchers

(a) Guided or unguided rockets, ballistic or cruise missiles capable of delivering a warhead or weapon of destruction to a range of at least 25 kilometres, and means designed or modified specifically for launching such missiles or rockets, if not covered by categories I through VI. For the purpose of the Register, this sub-category includes remotely piloted vehicles with the characteristics for missiles as defined above but does not include ground-to-air missiles.

(b) Man-Portable Air-Defence Systems (MANPADS).